Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Olver
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

Thank you for your strong leadership on transportation issues that impact so many of our constituents and Americans across the country.

As members of the San Francisco Bay Area Delegation, we are writing in support of a critical safety need in our region. Unfortunately, the devastating hurricanes along the Gulf Coast remind us that we too live in an area prone to natural disasters. The United States Geological Survey predicts with a 62% probability that at least one 6.7 magnitude or greater earthquake will occur in the Bay Area by 2032. Therefore, we must make investments now to seismically retrofit our critical infrastructure, which includes our mass transit systems.

As you prepare to mark-up the FY2007 Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, The Judiciary, and District of Columbia Appropriations bill, we respectfully request your support to include $10 million for the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District's (BART) Earthquake Safety Program.

BART is the backbone of the region's transit system, providing 323,000 weekday trips across 104 miles of track through forty-three stations in four counties and twenty-six cities across the Bay Area. The core system is over thirty years old an needs to be reinforced to modern seismic standards that will save lives and keep the Bay Area moving after the next earthquake.

A 2002 Seismic Vulnerability Study of the BART system identified the 3.6-mile underwater Transbay Tube (which serves the key San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge corridor), aerial guideways and stations as the most susceptible to earthquake damage. The ten-year, $1.6 billion Earthquake Safety Program will stabilize the Tube and reinforce and strengthen trackway and facilities of the original 74-mile, 34-station system using current seismic design techniques.

In November 2004, nearly 70% of Bay Area voters approved a $980 million general obligation bond to fund this important life-safety program. The State of California is contributing $134 million and Bay Area drivers are also contributing $143 million through an increase in local

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bridge tolls. Finally, BART, through passenger fares and parking revenue, has committed $50 million to this critical safety project.

Clearly, the federal government has a vested interest in leveraging this strong local financial support to protect a public asset that is conservatively valued at $15 billion. This early investment will not only save lives, but also keep the Bay Area economy moving after the next major earthquake, which we know is coming.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

ELLEN O. TAUSCHER
Member of Congress

NANCY PELOSI
Minority Leader

RICHARD POMBO
Member of Congress

MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress

ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

PETE STARK
Member of Congress

TOM LANTOS
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ANNA ESHOO
Member of Congress